

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows.

1. – 36. (Canceled)

37. (New) A method for granting access to a resource comprising:

sending a first authentication request to a first server;
receiving, in response to the first authentication request, an authentication assertion reference from the first server;
sending, to a second server, a request to access the resource operatively connected to the second server,
wherein the request comprises the authentication assertion reference,
wherein, in response to the request, the second server sends the first server a second authentication request comprising a certificate associated with the second server,
wherein the first server, in response to the second authentication request, determines whether the certificate is present in a trusted partner list maintained by the first server, and
wherein the first server, in response to determining whether the certificate is present in the trusted partner list, sends an authentication assertion to the second server; and
receiving a grant of access to the resource from the second server, wherein the second server grants access to the resource based on the authentication assertion.

38. (New) The method of claim 37, wherein prior to sending the first server the second authentication request, the second server identifies the first server using the authentication assertion reference.

39. (New) The method of claim 37, wherein sending a first authentication request to the first server comprises providing the first server with user login information.

40. (New) The method of claim 39, wherein the first authentication request is a Security Assertion Markup Language request in a SOAP envelope.
41. (New) A method for granting access to a resource comprising:
- receiving, by a first server, a request to access the resource operatively connected to the first server, wherein the request comprises an authentication assertion reference from a client;
 - sending, in response to the request, an authentication request to a second server, wherein the authentication request comprises a certificate associated with the first server;
 - receiving, in response to the authentication request, an authentication assertion from the second server,
 - wherein the second server, in response to the authentication request, determines whether the certificate is present in a trusted partner list maintained by the second server,
 - wherein the second server, in response to determining whether the certificate is present in the trusted partner list, sends the authentication assertion to the first server; and
 - granting, by the first server, access to the resource to the client based on the authentication assertion.
42. (New) The method of claim 41, wherein prior to sending the authentication request, the first server identifies the second server using the authentication assertion reference.
43. (New) The method of claim 41, wherein the client is authenticated by the second server prior to obtaining the authentication assertion reference.
44. (New) The method of claim 43, wherein the second authentication request is a Security Assertion Markup Language request in a SOAP envelope.
45. (New) A system for granting access to a resource comprising:
- a first server operatively connected to a client, the resource and a second server,

wherein the first server is configured to:

receive, from the client, a request to access the resource, wherein the request comprises an authentication assertion reference;
send, in response to the request, an authentication request to the second server, wherein the authentication request comprises a certificate associated with the first server;
receive, in response to the authentication request, an authentication assertion from the second server,
wherein the second server, in response to the authentication request, determines whether the certificate is present in a trusted partner list maintained by the second server, and
wherein the second server, in response to determining whether the certificate is present in the trusted partner list, sends the authentication assertion to the first server; and
grant access to the resource to the client based on the authentication assertion.

46. (New) The system of claim 45, wherein the client is authenticated by the second server prior to obtaining the authentication assertion reference.

47. (New) The system of claim 46, wherein the client provides the second server with user login information.

48. (New) The system of claim 47, wherein the second authentication request is a Security Assertion Markup Language request in a SOAP envelope.

49. (New) The system of claim 45, wherein prior to sending the authentication request, the first server identifies the second server using the authentication assertion reference.